

### A record of the Orange-winged Pytilia *Pytilia afra* from western Kenya

The Orange-winged Pytilia is undoubtedly a very uncommon species in Kenya, not reliably recorded for the last 40 years. Britton (1980) lists four records from between Voi, and Mombasa and Kikambala on the coast. He also states that it was known from the eastern edge of the central highlands from Kikuyu to Mt Kenya.

In the light of the above, it is interesting to have the following record of a pair of this species recorded from the Kongelai escarpment (1°28'N, 35°01'E), northwestern Kenya, some 770 km from Mombasa and 320 km from eastern Mt Kenya.

The birds were found around noon on 13 November 1989 10 km down the escarpment from Makutano town. The distinctive male was first noticed as it drank from a small pool beside a rocky stream bed. I immediately noticed the small bright red 'face mask' extending well on to the ear coverts and not extending on to the throat and upper breast (as in the Green-winged Pytilia *P. melba*). The bright orange-edged wings were also very obvious.

This male was watched on and off for about 40 min, and during this time it flew back and forth repeatedly between some nearby thick bushes and the small pools to drink and bathe. On one occasion it was joined by a female and they bathed together but the female disappeared quickly and was not seen again.

At the time of these observations I was leading an American birding tour and all 16 people in the group agreed on the identification. I am also familiar with the species from northeastern Rwanda where I had seen it on about six occasions during 1989.

Mrs J. Barnley, who lives near Kongelai, told me recently (pers. comm.) that J.G. Williams had seen the species on the escarpment many years ago. It should be looked for in these largely under-watched areas of the north west.

I thank D.A. Turner for his comments on the distribution of this species in Kenya.

### References

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Terry Stevenson, Box 1051, Nakuru, Kenya

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### Palearctic Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* wintering in tropical Africa—the first ringing recovery

There are several indications that Palearctic Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis* winter in tropical Africa (e.g., Ash 1978, Nikolaus 1987) even though the Birds of the western Palearctic (Cramp & Simmons 1977) could provide no proof. Most Palearctic Cattle Egrets are resident, but those from the Caspian Sea region are only summer visitors there and are expected to winter in Iran, Iraq and Kuwait.

Records from the northern Sudan (pers. obs.) give a picture as follows: breeding birds

visit northern Sudan during the rainy season. Until October, most birds leave the north, migrating to southern non-breeding grounds. In November, new birds arrive in small flocks, which stay until February. These birds show generally a preference for habitats near to water and are often associated with other Palaearctic migratory species. In April, the breeding birds arrive again from the south.

Birds caught for ringing at the White Nile at Khartoum of probable Palaearctic origin had the following measurements (mm and g):

#### January 1983 (n = 4)

wing	mean 261	range 253–268
weight	mean 353	range 320–385

Birds caught for ringing at the White Nile between Khartoum and Juba of Afrotropical origin:

#### August–May (n = 5)

wing	mean 241	range 227–250
weight	mean 310	range 280–325

A recently discovered recovery of a Cattle Egret from the Caspian Sea to Ethiopia is the first proof that, at least part, of the Palaearctic population winters in tropical Africa. The ringing and recovery data are:

Moscow C301698	01.07.1980	pull	Kalinovski Liman, Kyzil-Agach, Azerbaijan (39°00N, 48°50E).
	20–31.10.80	dead	Saraye Region, Ethiopia, 11°03N, 39°33E.

A similar migration pattern for related species (Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*, Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*, Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*) from the Caspian region has been reported by Kistchinski (1978).

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Gerhard Nikolaus, Bosenbüttel 4, 2859 Spieka, Federal Republic of Germany